BOOKS AND PUBLISHERS.

The "Sun" Shines on Dr. Lord.

The "New York Sun" in its review column publishes an estimate of John Lord's historical work which is likely to shock some of the faithful readers of that conservative historian, but most of them will never see it, because it is in a Sunday paper. It is as follows:

"Time was, and not so very long ago, when history in the United States was a subject for popular entertainment and in the colleges was dealt with by broken-down ministers who were not up to teaching the classics or mathematics. It is true that Prescott and Motley and Parkman wrote books that no college thought of using and which people read only as literature. History is a solemn subject in our universities now and highly specialized. It is studied by more students probably than any other branch of knowledge that they teach and has become a nursery for monographs and dissertations on all manner of learned and uninteresting points, second only to sociology and civics. Nobody dreamed of that when Dr. John Lord began to lecture fifty or more years ago.

"Those were the palmy days of the lyceums and for forty years the Rev. John Lord, LL. D., wandered up and down the land delivering popular historical lectures before young ladies' seminaries and rural self-improvement societies, just as smooth-voiced lecturers now entertain similar audiences with explanations of magic lantern and cinematograph pictures of foreign lands. Dr. Lord lived to a ripe old age, eighty years and more; when he grew too old to lecture he published his lectures in book form and called them 'Beacon Lights of History.'

"There were a good many volumes of the 'Beacon Lights of History.' They are now published in a complete set of fifteen volumes, a universal history of a sort, by James F. Clarke & Co. Dr. Lord's lectures fill twelve volumes and part of the thirteenth; the rest of that volume and the fifteenth are filled with borrowed essays, like Dr. F. H. Hedge's 'Goethe' or articles written to order like Mayo W. Hazeltine's 'Herbert Spencer' and 'Darwin,' to bring the work up to date. The lectures will provide entertainment of a serious kind to persons who have not the energy to read real history. They may be recommended as containing no ideas at which even the most orthodox could be shocked. It seems a pity that in so large a work space could not be found for a biography of Dr. Lord, who marks a curious phase in an American civilization that has passed by."

Stories of Herrmann.

The announcement is made that the life of the late Alexander Herrmann, the celebrated conjurer, will be written by his life-long friend, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, who is gathering material for the work. Herrmann's career was crowded with interesting incidents. Not many months before his death in Chicago the magician was a guest at the famous, but now defunct, Whitechapel Club, the rendezvous of Chicago Bohemians. On the night in question a venerable Japanese priest was present. In the course of a few tricks Herrmann picked up a deck of cards and asked someone to select a card. The seven of clubs was the card drawn from the pack, and it was shown to the spectators, but not to the magician. The card was replaced in the deck, which was shuffled and then handed to one of the spectators.

"Look through the deck, please," said Herrmann.

The holder of the cards did as requested.

"Is the card that was drawn in the pack?" asked the wizard.

"No, sir," answered the spectator.

"What was the card?"

"The seven of clubs."

"Well, gentlemen," said Herrmann, "if one of you will kindly unlace the prelate's shoe, you will find the card that has vanished from the pack."

After a smiling protest the Japanese priest unlaced his shoe, and there, to the amazement of all, was found the seven spot of clubs.

The story of Herrmann's introduction to General Grant is familiar, no doubt, to many readers. After the two men had chatted for awhile, Grant fumbled in his pockets for cigars.

"Don't trouble yourself," said the magician, taking a bunch of Havanas from the whiskers of the amazed general.

Mrs. Craigie's View of Balzac.

Mrs. Craigie (John Oliver Hobbes) in a recent lecture on Balzac, said of the great novelist's methods:

"It was his habit to write three or four books at a time. This method, which has been and is followed by all great painters, is beyond question the right one. It is the one sure safeguard against veiled autobiography, which is the fatal danger to those who concentrate for too long a period on any one group of characters and any one particular set of scenes. Balzac's novels are, therefore, well balanced. They are always impersonal, always just, and in order to describe life one must show, not merely a knowledge of men and the spirit of criticism, but a strong sense of justice."

American Diplomacy in the East.

The Hon. John W. Foster, who has had a longer connection with the American diplomatic service than any man except John Quincy Adams, has written an important book entitled "American Diplomacy in the Orient," which will be published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co. in the spring of 1903. The book will contain a review of the early American intercourse with China, the policy observed toward that country, the opening of Japan, the political history and annexation of Hawaii, the relation of the United States to the later history of China, Japan, Korea, Samoa, and the results of the Spanish war in the far East. A seventh revised edition of Mr. Foster's "A Century of American Diplomacy" has just been published owing to the steady demand for this book.

By the Author of "Cape Cod Folks."

"Winslow Plain," like most of the later work of Sarah P. McL. Greene, is more or less a repetition of her first and best book, "Cape Cod Folks." The person who tells the story is a small boy, and the heroine is a young village girl, Patience Haskell, who, for no apparent reason, dies an untimely death. The best bit of character drawing in it is that of the hired man, Ellis, who tells the small boy about a mythical place called Kilburn City, in which everybody has all kinds of a good time, and which he himself once found, after a severe battle with two wildcats. But, as he further explains:

"Don't you never set out with your valise and umbrell' for no Kilburn City, and go to askin' your way of everybody you meet. 'Cause why not? Wal, I'll tell ye; the world's full o' folks 't's just mean enough to mislead ye, and them 't really knows where it is, they're keepin' mighty hush about it. The only way to git there, Tim, is to chance on it; an' it's just the same as the rewls about ketchin' fish—you don't want to show no smartness, nor care the leastest durn; then, like as not, some time when you're trampin' along sayin' to yerself, 'Wal, this 'ere road's pleasant, this 'ere road's good enough for me, even if I don't never git nowheres—why, there you be right on Kilburn City!'" (New York: Harper and Brothers.)

A Dainty Heroine.

"Book News" says of Elinor Glyn's new book:

"Like a rare old miniature set in dull gold, quaintly wrought in graceful, antique design and jewel-studded, 'The Reflections of Ambrosine' greets our eyes. Perhaps the dainty frontispiece suggests the figure—that frontispiece of a beautiful girl painted in delicate, soft and hazy colors and becomingly framed in gems.

"Mrs. Elinor Glyn is a writer of unique attainments. She has a refreshing touch. She introduces people of many kinds, showing that her knowledge of the world is not confined within narrow limits; she always reserves one character for that magnetism which must and does hold the readers one and all.

"Ambrosine is a French maiden and reared by a stately grandmother, who herself might seem almost to have just stepped down from an old portrait on the wall of a French palace. Many of the ideas of this stately woman at first appear overdrawn, but exaggeration is saved by a touching pathos that hovers over all. Brought up to respect customs of etiquette most exquisite in their fineness and sensitiveness of conception, Ambrosine is like an echo from the past, like a comtesse, as Sir Anthony aptly calls her, of a century before. She is an exact reproduction of her ancestor the Marquis de Calincourt, that other Ambrosine whose picture she so closely resembles and whose character she so earnestly desires to emulate."

A Novel of the Far West.

"Mariella of Out West," by Ella Higginson, should secure for its author a staked-out claim on Mr. Paul Wilstach's literary map of the United States, in the Puget Sound country, for that is where the scene of the novel is laid, and it is a good novel, and true to life. The heroine is a little country girl of a backwoods settlement, who absorbs what refinements she may in an unpromising environment, which is distinguished chiefly for having things it ought not to have, and being deprived of things it ought to have. The strongest influences for good in the girl's life are the woods and a young school teacher, with whom she has a strong though immature friendship. She is a wild flower, pure and simple, and the author has had the courage to picture what many people will pronounce impossible, a really pure and beautiful girl sprung from squalid ancestry, saved from immorality and degradation by her own inherent sense of refinement and the innate progressiveness of the American nature. What is good in her parents remains good in her, and she does not develop the unattractive traits fostered in them by sordid and vulgar experience.

Mariella's mother is not only vulgar, but foolish, and not only foolish, but immoral; her father is a nonentity. Yet, after all, this family is no worse in point of morals than those pictured in some of the society novels of the period, and as far as its influence on the daughter goes it is in some respects an improvement, for the parents are at any rate anxious to keep her innocent and pure. The mother yields to temptation herself, but she would be the last to counsel any such course in her daughter. She is vain and common, but she is not cynical nor cold-blooded. The merciless realism of the earlier chapters of the story may be a little too much for the ordinary reader, but it is good literature all the same. There is no sense in holding up to admiration the unshrinking methods of Tolstoy and Zola, and abusing American novelists who use the same methods with more purpose.

A strong character in the book is Mariella's farmer lover. His character is well drawn throughout, though his heroism at the end may seem to some a little overdrawn. It would be an impossible piece of business, perhaps, in any other country but this, but in some respects American life is not like that of the older civilizations, and one of these differences lies in the attitude of the American workingman toward his women folk. Altogether, the author has done a good piece of work, and while it has its crudities, it is a sign of something finer in the future. (New York: The Macmillan Company.)

A Judicious Change.

Hamilton W. Mabie, at the recent Mark Twain dinner, told a little story on a certain Boston paper. He said that originally this paper was called the "Fireside Companion," but that when modern methods of heating were introduced it became the "Christian Register."

Hogarth.

A reviewer for the "Academy" discusses, apropos of a recent edition of Austin Dobson's "William Hogarth," the reasons for the decline of the vogue of this master.

In popular favor Hogarth steadily declined throughout the century. The average Victorian "cultured" attitude toward him is perhaps well hit off by a passage from Mrs. Oliphant which Austin Dobson prints in his "Bibliography:" "Before his pictures the vulgar laugh, and the serious spectator holds his peace, gazing often with eyes awe-stricken at the wonderful unimpassioned tragedy. But never a tear comes at Hogarth's call. It is his sentence of everlasting expulsion from the highest heaven of art." This delicious sentence is evidence of the fact that when woman arrived triumphantly in the mild fields of Victorian art, she gently, even reverently, relegated Hogarth the moralist to the top shelf. And Hogarth, in the popular mind, is on the top shelf today. It is useless to deny it. Apart from two editions of Austin Dobson's "Life," there is absolutely no modern edition of Hogarth's works where the prints given are not a travesty of the original. In the words of an old cottager, who on being asked why he had hidden some torn prints of the "Marriage A-la Mode" under his bed, replied: "Well, sir, me an' Mrs. 'All thoughts as how they was 'ardly respectible,"—Hogarth is 'ardly respectable. One half of society keeps him today on the top shelf, and the other half keep h'm "under the bed."

A Quaint Character Sketch.

"The Criterion" says of one of the Century Company's holiday books:

"We have several authors who have portrayed the Southern negro character with success, but none that quite equals Mrs. Stuart in her perfect mastery of both the broad strokes and the delicate touches, her comprehension of the pathos as well as the humor, her satire and her sympathy. In Napoleon Jackson she pictures a negro who so far makes a fine gentleman of himself that he can do no work, but sits in a plush rocking chair and talks cheerful philosophy. He is supported by his admiring and industrious wife, whose explanation of his indolence is most original: 'He can't work, 'ca'se his mammy she marked him so. She had been overworked befo' he was born, an' she marked her chile for rest. She 'lowed dat she had sweated enough for two, an' she nuver raised de mark off'n 'im. It's a spell she laid on 'im. It ain't de labor dat hurts 'im; it's de thoughts of it.' There are numerous epigrams in the quaint language of the loquacious negress with an atmosphere of humor throughout, but the attentive reader may find in the little volume a great deal besides the fun.

A Statue of Balzac.

On November 22 a statue of Balzac was unveiled in Paris, at the intersection of the Rue de Balzac and the Avenue de Friedland. Addresses were delivered by M. Hermant, president of the Society of Men of Letters, and M. Chaumie, minister of instruction.